

Dagens Nyheter, 26 april 1980

"Couple's New Book: Raoul Wallenberg Died in a Polish Forest"

Raoul Wallenberg died in a Polish woods during a rescue attempt by partisans. Two Swedes engaged in helping refugees took part in a rescue operation in 1947 but no one has chosen to listen to their eyewitness accounts.

This is what they say in a book now being published at a time when interest in Wallenberg is so great.

Hans and Britt Ehrenström now want to discuss what they believe was their duty to keep silent about for so many years. But their disappointment was too strong when they found out that their experiences in the Polish woods are not included in the documents on the Wallenberg case released by the Foreign Department in January.

The events of 1947 are by no means unknown to the Foreign Department. An account of an expedition to the Polish forest, written by a Swede, Tage Persson-Hörning, then living in Poland, is included in Wallenberg dossier volume 6. Exchanges of letters between the Foreign Department and diplomats reveal that there was extreme skepticism surrounding the Ehrenström's experiences in Poland. The person identified as a contact man was identified by the Foreign Department as a well-known adventurer, who later attempted something similar in Prague where he and a Swedish diplomat, Stig Engfeldt, tried to save a Swede who was a prisoner in Czechoslovakia.

What is not included in the Foreign Department documents but is the main theme of the book is Mrs. Ehrenström's account of how she and a Polish officer came to a farm where several prisoners were being kept. They were taken there by partisans who blew up a train taking prisoners from Lwow to Prague.

"Could this be Raoul Wallenberg? ...He was wrapped in a horse blanket or gray blanket up to the armpits. His head was wrapped in burlap. His neck was covered with thick black beard stubble with a few gray hairs here and there," writes Britt Ehrenström who also adds that she did not have a description of Wallenberg and therefore could not identify him. She had seen him many years earlier in Stockholm, but didn't have any exact description to go by.

Britt Ehrenström says that a handshake from the silent prisoner made her understand that it must be Wallenberg. She says she also received a rucksack with initials which could have been WR.

According to information she received from the partisans, all identification papers were destroyed. One of the prisoners was a Swede. No names were mentioned. After her visit, the barn for the prisoners was burned down. She had judged the man to be dying and any attempt to remove him was impossible.

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Wallenberg book...

Britt Ehrenström says she tried to report the meeting with the prisoner/ID card carrier of the Wallenberg committee, Anders Örne but was stopped by committee members Rudolph Philipp and Guy von Dardel, who said they represented the family.

According to the Ehrenströms, a series of complicated situations stopped them from submitting a written report to the Foreign Department. None of their experiences are in the dossier and Ehrenström's report to the diplomatic head in Warsaw is not included either.

For the moment, the Foreign Department does not want to comment on the couple's commentaries before reading them. It does confirm, however, that nothing written by them is included in the archives. Earlier, this episode was characterized as one of many dead ends.

Dina Hästö